babajob.com

Babajob.com was started as a means of giving everyone in India access to better job opportunities, especially people in the Bottom of the Pyramid. We were inspired by research that shows the primary pathway out of poverty is income diversification, i.e. changing jobs. But low-income job seekers generally have to rely on their limited social networks to find new employment, severely limiting their ability to find a better, higher paying job. To address this problem, we serve as the largest informal sector jobs marketplace in India, accessible online and offline. As an example of what we are trying to do, we would like to share the story of Prabhu, a 36 year old man who is married with two children.

Monday through Saturday, Prabhu and his wife wake up at six in the morning, cook breakfast, and leave their home in Kolar Gold Fields (a mining town outside Bangalore), board the local train to the Bangalore suburb of Whitefield. Prabhu worked as a driver for the Shahs, a family living in an upscale gated community in Whitefield. He had found the job through a friend of his who worked for one of the Shahs' neighbors. The Shahs paid Prabhu 9,000 rupees a month (~USD 136), less than Prabhu would have liked to make.

Then one day Prabhu heard about Babajob.com and how it's possible to build a profile on the site without using the internet. Prabhu gave a missed call to 888 000 4444, and then received a call back that took him through a set of automated questions. Once he had answered them, he started to receive SMS about relevant job opportunities; he had a live profile that could be seen by employers on Babajob.com, all for free and all without accessing the internet. By calling the number associated with one of the jobs he received an SMS about, Prabhu was able to apply for a job and connect with an employer looking for a driver. After a brief phone interview, and then a follow up interview in person, Prabhu was able to get the job. Now Prabhu makes 15,000 rupees a month (~USD 212-227), significantly more than he previously earned.

The offline system that Prabhu used to create a profile and apply on Babajob.com is an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) platform that allows anyone with a mobile phone find jobs, regardless of their internet connectivity. We built this platform with support from USAID DIV in order to reach the 85% of Indians who do not have internet access (McKinsey & Company 2014). This is one example of the ways that we have been able to dramatically expand our social impact and operations with the assistance we have received from USAID. With USAID's funding and support, we have been able to scale up significantly and improve our ability to reach

more job seekers Pan India. The following are brief descriptions of projects we have launched with our DIV grant. We have focused on increasing access and improving users' interactions with our platforms so that we can more actively pursue our mission of better jobs for everyone.

Schools Partnerships

Both the public and private sector have identified the skills gap in India as a large opportunity to provide vocation-related training opportunity and are beginning to provide vocational training certification courses focused at improving candidate employability. These courses range from 3 months to a year and train job seekers to be employment-ready for a number of sectors, including retail, hospitality, BPO, and office administration.

Babajob is working to become an integral part of this training ecosystem by complementing the placement services of training institutes (for-profit or NGO-driven) that train candidates in relevant job categories (sales/marketing, retail, BPO, Data Entry) in urban and peri-urban areas. Babajob is developing tools, content and features that will enable training institutes and schools to easily access Babajob's digitized job content and engage with us independently.   Students can use the Babajob portal to search for relevant, high paying, local jobs, while focusing on their core mandate of training, all for free. The portal will also enable schools and placement counselors to track a candidate's career progression over the years, even after graduation and placement.

Local Language IVR Platform

Babajob has invested resources into creating an automated voice platform to enable job seekers to register, search and apply for job with ease, through their mobile phones. This platform has enabled Babajob to overcome barriers of internet access and literacy.

Job seekers are able to use the Intelligent IVR platform to select from a number of menus recorded in four languages. By navigating these menus, job seekers will be able to create a profile, apply for these jobs and importantly connect to an employer.
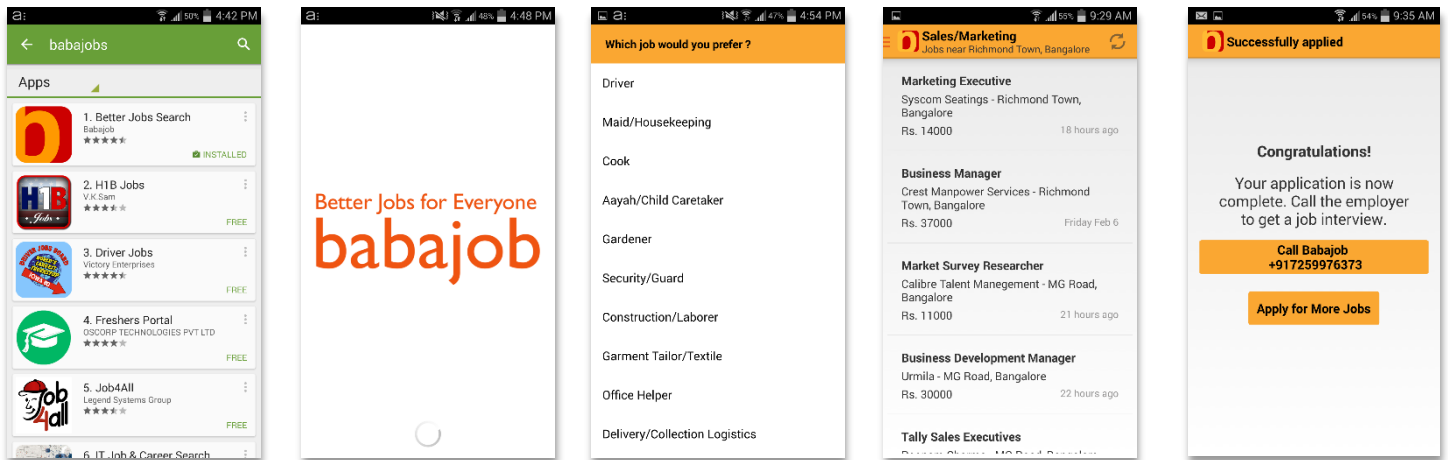
Our IVR platform has been one of our strongest channels, helping drive job seeker growth by providing offline access for everyone who is looking for a job, but are not connected to the internet. We are continuing our work on the IVR platform to increase the number of languages it is available in, as well as improve it so that job seekers can get the full Babajob experience without having internet access.

Mobile App

Babajob has developed a simple, easy-to-access and visually navigable mobile app available for free download on mobile phones with an emphasis on usability for cheaper handsets. So far, we have been through multiple phases of development and have an app that provides job seekers

with access to our platform. With it, job seekers can create profiles, apply to jobs, and track the success of their applications for any job categories. The App is available on the Google Play store through this link: https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.babajob.app

Screenshots of the Google Play store's mobile listing and some of the screens from the app are below:

We are currently working on improving the usability of the app and will start driving more traffic through it as our design improves. With the rapid increase of smartphones in India, we believe this channel will help expand our reach and allow more job seekers to access Babajob.